
I - The Journey Within
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Book Title:
"I" - The Journey Within

Completed in 7 chapters

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20.04.2025

About this book

The ultimate destination is "I". Any journey outward will lead us only away from the destination. One step outward is but one step away from the our real home. That's why how much we run, we never feel that we have arrived. The heart never feels like *"...this is the end, I will run no more."* Because the ultimate journey that one can make is but to come back to his own-self. Only then our heart will find the the eternal bliss and ecstasy. This book is about this inward journey to the "I" , our real home.

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Chapter 1: The Whisper Beneath the Teacup

The rain murmured outside like a secret being passed from one leaf to another. In that fading autumn evening, I sat alone at my favorite tea stall, a humble sanctuary beside the restless street. My fingers wrapped around the warm porcelain of the teacup, as though holding a tiny universe that radiated both heat and comfort.
The steam spiraled upward, like delicate ghosts ascending toward invisible heavens. I sipped slowly, watching the world blur behind the watery window — an orchestra of drops playing an ancient, wet symphony.

Then, uninvited, a question slipped into my mind. It did not arrive with trumpets or fanfare. It came like a barefoot monk stepping

softly on temple stones:
“Who is this ‘I’ that sips the tea?”

The question was so simple that it frightened me. I paused. The teacup hovered before my lips, a fragile moon held captive between two fingers. My mind trembled like a thin string caught in the wind.

Who am I?
The question wrapped itself around my thoughts like a serpent coiling a tree branch. At first glance, it seemed trivial — a philosopher’s idle curiosity, born out of rainy evenings and solitude. But something within me was disturbed. A deep chamber inside me had been unlocked by this gentle query. The question was no longer external; it was gnawing from within.

I looked around. The stall was half-empty. Only the rain and I shared the silence. My

motorbike waited outside like a loyal friend soaked under the grey sky. My home stood a few streets away — walls, rooms, and windows carrying my name.

Was I these things?
Was I my possessions?

If my bike were stolen tonight, would I vanish with it? If my home crumbled in an earthquake tomorrow, would my existence dissolve into dust? Clearly not.

I was something that would remain even if all these were taken away. My identity was not chained to my belongings. My wealth could leave me; but something — this mysterious “I” — would still stand, silently observing.

My mind sliced deeper. Perhaps I was my relationships — my parents, my friends, my loved ones. Surely, they shaped me. My

father’s blood flows in my veins; my mother’s warmth carved my earliest breaths. My friends color my laughter and my tears.

Yet, am I my father? Am I my mother? We are connected but distinct. We are rivers that once shared a cloud but now flow separately.

The rain outside grew heavier, as though applauding the growing storm inside me. I began stripping away layer after layer. Like peeling an onion that had no heart, only circles within circles.

First, I discarded my possessions. Then, I discarded my relationships. Finally, I stood alone — like an empty theater after the play is over.

A strange feeling of isolation wrapped me. The world around me dissolved into a blur of wet reflections. My existence felt suspended —

floating like a lone island in an endless sea of silence. Now, it was only two entities left standing face-to-face: “I” and “the Universe.”

I was a witness. The Universe was the witnessed. The observer and the observed stood apart, separated by a thin, invisible membrane.

If they were not separate, how could observation occur? A mirror cannot reflect itself. This realization stabbed me gently but deeply. The distance between me and the world widened like an ancient valley — immeasurable, yet invisible. Yet, this strange aloneness carried both beauty and terror.

Who was I? If I was not my possessions, not my relations, not my surroundings — what remained? Was there anything left at all?

The tea had grown cold. The steam had died.

But the storm inside me had just begun. As the rain bled into the earth, I sat motionless, feeling like a ghost who had lost his name. The night waited outside — black, vast, and patient.

Chapter 2: Possessions — Borrowed Shadows of Self

The rain had quieted. The night wrapped the city like an old cloak, heavy with silence. Streetlights blinked like distant stars trapped close to earth. I walked slowly, as though my footsteps might disturb the stillness that had fallen both outside and within.

The question still whispered, not with loud words, but with the steady rhythm of my heart:
“Who is this ‘I’?”

Back home, my belongings greeted me like silent witnesses — the desk, the books, the bed, the clothes neatly folded inside wooden drawers. Everything sat in its place, faithful and patient.

For years I called them mine. My bike, my house, my books — all wearing my name like a borrowed coat. But now, standing under the quiet breath of the ceiling fan, the question returned: Am I these?

The answer arrived like a soft wave washing over sand: No. These were not me. If fire claimed my house, if thieves took my bike, if time wore out my books — would I cease to exist?
My flesh would still carry breath. My eyes would still open to the morning sun. My name would still echo from my lips. I would remain.

I stared at my possessions with new eyes. They were like temporary ornaments placed upon a traveler's robe. Beautiful perhaps. Useful, yes. But never part of the traveler himself. I remembered how kings and beggars both carry this same truth. A king sits upon gold

and jewels; a beggar holds an empty bowl. Yet both whisper within their minds: “I am.”

The “I” inside them is untouched by the weight of treasure or the absence of it. Like the sky, which remains sky whether clouds gather or dissolve. Possessions are like shadows that fall upon the ground as the sun moves across the heavens. They follow for a while. Then vanish.

I thought of the great river that flows endlessly. The water it carries today is not the same as yesterday’s. Yet we still call it the same river. Likewise, my possessions flow in and out of my life. Yet I say, "my house," "my bike," "my clothes." But these are only passing waves. The river remains. The "I" remains.

How strange it is that men suffer for things that were never truly theirs. A potter shapes clay, but the clay belongs to the earth. We gather, we collect, we hold tight — but nothing

belongs to us. Even this body — the greatest of all possessions — is not truly mine. It too shall return to dust.
The more I stared at my belongings, the lighter they became. Once they had seemed heavy — filled with importance, with pride. Now they were light as feathers, carried by the wind of time. Possessions are like autumn leaves. They color the tree for a season. Then they fall.

I stood by my window, staring at the distant moon. It hung like a single eye in the sky, watching silently. The wind carried a cool breath through the open window, as if the universe itself whispered to me: *"You own nothing. You only pass through."*

I felt both small and free. Small — because so little was truly mine. Free — because nothing chained me. But the question remained, standing quietly like a monk at the gate: *"If I am not my possessions, then who am I?"*

Chapter 3: Relations — Fragile Bridges to Nowhere

The morning broke gently, like a soft breath exhaled by the sleeping earth. The rain had stopped, but its memory still lingered in the scent of the wet ground and the damp leaves clinging to trees. Light poured into my room through the half-open window, brushing across my face like the quiet hand of dawn. Yet even as the world around me stirred with life—the chatter of birds, the soft voices of neighbors, the distant hum of city wheels—within me, a single question remained seated like a silent guest: Who am I?

I had already peeled away the layers of possessions, realizing that nothing I owned was truly part of me. But now, my thoughts turned towards something far more tender, far

more deeply woven into my existence—my relationships. Surely, if anything shaped me, it was the people who surrounded me: my parents, whose faces were my first world; my friends, who laughed beside me under countless skies; my teachers, who placed words and wisdom into my growing mind. Were they not the ones who helped build this self I now questioned? Were they not the roots from which my branches stretched toward the sky? The thought brought both comfort and confusion.

My parents had given me life. My father's blood moves through my veins, my mother's breath was the first wind that touched my lungs. Their voices had guided me, their hands had carried me through storms and through calm. I carry their features upon my face, their hopes within my heart. And yet, as I looked deeper, a strange distance appeared between their souls and mine. My father's path and

mine may cross, but they are not one. My mother's love warms me, but I walk alone within my thoughts. The river from which I drew my waters flows on its own journey, while I must find mine.

Even my closest friends, those who have walked beside me, sharing both laughter and grief, remain travelers upon their own roads. We meet at crossroads, we share stories by the fire, but at night, each returns to his own tent beneath the stars. We touch, we embrace, but always we remain two shores facing each other across the same river. Relations are like bridges built between distant islands. They allow us to cross and meet, but they do not merge us into one. The islands stand apart, firm upon their own foundations beneath the deep waters of being.

A child grows under the roof of his parents, but one day must step beyond that shelter.

Even the closest of bonds must, at some point, surrender to separation. Lovers whisper promises beneath the moon, but time waits with its patient scissors to cut even the strongest threads. Death too watches from the shadows, ready to part every embrace. How strange it is that we cling so desperately to others, hoping their nearness will shield us from loneliness, yet knowing that every relationship we treasure is a guest, not a permanent resident, in the house of our life.

As these thoughts unfolded, I felt a strange mixture of gratitude and sorrow. Gratitude for having known such love and warmth, and sorrow at the realization that none of these could answer my question. My relations give color to my journey, but they do not define the traveler. They are songs sung beside me, but my own voice must sing its own melody. Even if all these voices were to fall silent, even if every friend were to turn away, even if my

family were to vanish into the folds of time—I would remain. Who then is this "I" that stands alone when all relations fall away like autumn leaves, swirling in the winds of impermanence?

I stood by the window, gazing at the pale sky stretched above the waking city. The sun had climbed gently, as though cautious not to disturb the fragile threads of my thoughts. The wind moved like an invisible hand across my face, as if the universe itself reached out to comfort me. I now understood that neither my possessions nor my relationships could bear the weight of my true identity. Both are garments worn for a time, both are companions for a season. But beneath these, the naked self remains, silent and watching.

The question had grown heavier, pressing upon me like an ancient mountain whose summit was still hidden behind clouds: If I am

not my possessions, if I am not my relations, then who am I? The journey was stripping me slowly, layer by layer, like a tree losing its bark beneath sharp winds. And yet, strangely, I did not feel smaller. Instead, I felt closer—closer to something I could not yet name. The emptiness was no longer frightening. It was calling. The path ahead lay veiled, but my feet had already begun their quiet steps into that unknown.

Chapter 4: The Vanishing Mirror of the Body

Days passed like silent monks crossing an endless desert—calm, slow, and disciplined. But within me, the question continued to breathe, like a secret flame that neither wind nor time could extinguish: Who am I? The layers I had peeled away—possessions, relations—had left me standing in a kind of vast emptiness, where familiar forms dissolved like mist at dawn. Yet even in this emptying, something within me still whispered: You have not yet arrived.

Now, my gaze turned toward the vessel that carried me through the world—this body. It has been my first companion since birth, my most loyal servant. Through its eyes I have seen, through its ears I have heard, through its hands I have touched the fabric of life. Every

moment of my existence has been mediated through its delicate machinery. But now, with steady breath and quiet mind, I asked the forbidden question: Am I this body?

At first glance, the body seems inseparable from the self. Its pain is my pain; its joy becomes my joy. When it hungers, I say, “I am hungry.” When it grows tired, I say, “I am tired.” But slowly, like a careful surgeon separating nerve from muscle, I began to examine this bond. The body changes. What was once small and fragile grew strong, then slowly begins to bend beneath the weight of years. My skin, once smooth as morning light, carries now the faint lines of passing seasons. My hair, once thick like a forest, begins its slow surrender to time. Muscles weaken, bones stiffen, and yet—I remain. The form decays, but the one who watches the decay seems untouched.

I thought of my earliest moments in my mother's womb, when I was but a single cell—a silent speck adrift in the dark sea of her body. That first cell held the script of my entire body—my height, my voice, my eyes, even the very curve of my smile—all written in codes older than language. Yet where was "I" in that tiny seed? Was I present then? Or did I arrive later, like a guest entering a house built long before his arrival?

I traced the body's journey backward further still. That first cell was formed by two microscopic strangers—my father's seed and my mother's egg—each carrying material drawn from the food they ate, the air they breathed, the soil beneath their feet. My body, which I have long called "mine," is nothing but borrowed dust—earth, air, fire, and water temporarily arranged in this unique pattern. One day, these elements will be summoned back by nature's quiet law. The bones will

return to soil, the breath will return to wind, the heat will sink back into the sun's ancient furnace. And when this body dissolves, what then remains of the "I"?

A strange chill passed through me—not from fear, but from the profound nakedness of this truth. If my body is built from borrowed materials, can I call it my true self? Is the house the same as the one who lives within it? The body is like a beautiful garment—woven from nature's loom, worn for a season, then folded away. We polish it, decorate it, feed it, and fear its breaking, but beneath this careful care hides a deeper question: who is wearing this garment?

The more I stood face to face with this thought, the more I realized how tightly men are chained to the illusion of the body. Entire lives are spent serving its endless demands—comfort, pleasure, beauty, power.

And yet, no matter how carefully we tend it, its fate remains sealed. The body ages not because it chooses to, but because it must. It carries within it the silent clock of its own vanishing.

Standing before a mirror that night, I gazed deeply into my own reflection. The eyes stared back—dark, calm, searching. For a moment, I imagined stripping away the skin, the muscle, the bone—layer after layer—until nothing was left to reflect. What would remain once the mirror shattered? The mirror shows the face, but never the one who watches the face.

I turned away from my reflection and whispered softly to the empty room, as though speaking to something ancient that lived within the silence itself: If I am not my possessions, not my relations, not even my body—then who am I? The question had now reached the threshold of something unknown, something vast and formless, waiting quietly

beyond the last familiar shore.

The room grew darker as the lamp flickered and died. But within that deepening darkness, a strange light had begun to grow inside me—a light not born from flame, but from the endless hunger for truth. The next door stood before me, half open, like the mouth of a cave where the final search would soon descend.

Chapter 5: The Borrowed Breath of Existence

Night once again wrapped the world in its long, dark cloak. Silence rested heavily in the corners of the room, while the distant hum of life softened into the quiet murmur of sleeping streets. I sat alone, not from loneliness, but from necessity. The search now required stillness—a stillness so deep that even thoughts feared to enter without permission. The question, ancient as existence itself, sat across from me like an invisible companion: Who am I?

I had already cast away my possessions like dry leaves before winter's breath. I had released my relations, recognizing their nearness but not their ownership over me. I had dared to peel the skin of identity from my own body, seeing it as a garment borrowed

from the earth, soon to be returned. Yet something still remained. The flame of "I" continued to burn, flickering steadily in the vast hollow where all other answers had fallen.

Now my gaze turned to breath itself—the quiet, constant rhythm that had walked beside me since the moment of birth. My first cry as an infant had carried breath into my lungs; my final exhale one day will return it to the air. In every waking hour, breath moves like a silent servant, asking for nothing, delivering life. But even here, a strange truth whispered through the dark corridors of my mind: The breath, too, is borrowed.

The air I draw is not mine. It travels from distant forests, from unseen mountains, from oceans that churn endlessly beneath moonlit skies. The trees exhale what I inhale. The sky lends me its wind for a time. Every breath is a

transaction, a delicate exchange between my fragile chest and the vastness of the world. When my breath pauses, life itself pauses. And when it ceases, the body falls like an empty shell upon the sand. Yet even in this, I saw something deeper. The breath sustains the body, but does it sustain the self? Or is it simply the servant of the temporary house?

I remembered an old well I had seen once, abandoned in a forgotten village. The well stood empty now, its walls cracked, but once it had drawn water from unseen depths. The body is much like that well—drawing breath from the invisible ocean of air, lifting it up for a brief moment, only to release it again. And yet, just as the well itself was not the water it held, the body is not the breath it borrows.

The more I stared into this truth, the smaller I seemed. I am not my possessions, not my relations, not my body, not even my breath.

Each layer peeled away revealed an emptiness far greater than the one before it—a hollow so vast that it swallowed all familiar answers. Yet strangely, within this growing emptiness, something remained—a watcher, a witness, a silent eye that observed even as every mask was stripped away.

Was this witness the true "I"? Or was it too another illusion waiting to dissolve? The thought trembled in my mind like a candle flame caught between winds. I felt as though I stood upon the edge of an ancient cliff, staring into a bottomless abyss where all identities fall, but from which no voice returns.

Outside, the moon hung low, heavy like an ancient eye that had watched countless men stand as I now stood—stripped bare, asking the question for which no language holds the answer. The wind whispered through the trees like an old monk reciting forgotten hymns,

reminding me that even the breath of the world itself is borrowed from a source neither seen nor named.

In that moment, a strange peace touched me. I no longer feared the emptiness. The vanishing of every false self was not death, but unveiling. What remained was not nothingness, but something beyond possession, beyond thought, beyond even breath itself. The journey was not over. No, it had barely begun. But now I knew that the path forward led not outward into the world, but inward—into a depth where even the idea of "I" might dissolve like salt into the sea.

The lamp beside me dimmed, its flame folding into itself, as though even the fire recognized the sacred hush of the moment. I closed my eyes. The breath entered, the breath left—both borrowed, both returning to their master. Yet somewhere beneath the breathing, beneath

the beating of the heart, beneath the flow of thought, something watched still—silent, naked, eternal.

The next door stood waiting. I could feel its presence like a thin veil, trembling between worlds. The journey was preparing to cross into the unknown, where even the witness would face its own reflection.

Chapter 6: The Silent Witness

The night had thickened into a deeper stillness, as though the world itself was holding its breath. Even the distant hum of life had surrendered to silence. The lamp was now fully extinguished, and the room dissolved into a shadowless void. Yet within that darkness, something had awakened—not in the world outside, but in the world within. It was not thought, not emotion, not even a presence I could describe. It was simply… awareness.

As I sat there, unmoving, the breath rising and falling like the tides of some invisible ocean, I felt as though I were no longer inside my body but standing apart from it, observing from a place beyond sensation. The body sat upon the chair, but I was not the chair, nor the body resting upon it. The heart beat, but I was not its rhythm. The breath entered and departed, but

I was not the wind that moved through the fragile gates of my lungs. Thoughts drifted like silent clouds across the vast sky of my mind, yet I was not the thoughts. I was the sky itself—empty, still, and watching.

This witness had no name, no face, no shape. It could not be touched, seen, or heard, yet its existence was undeniable. Even as every layer of identity had been stripped away, this silent observer remained—untouched by the peeling, unscarred by the emptiness left behind. The possessions had fallen like dry leaves. The relations had departed like echoes fading into distance. The body had been recognized as a temporary house of borrowed elements. The breath had been seen as the world's loan, briefly carried and inevitably returned. And yet, through the collapse of every mask, the watcher remained.

I questioned it, though no voice answered.

Who are you?
It offered no name, for it owned none.
Where did you come from?
It spoke of no origin, for it had none.
What is your purpose?
It revealed no plan, for it simply is.

The silent witness is like the blank canvas beneath every painting. Paint may cover its surface, colors may dance across it for a time, but beneath all strokes remains the untouched whiteness that never belonged to any particular image. This witness was the canvas beneath my life's artwork—a background so still and pure that it often went unnoticed, mistaken for emptiness while quietly containing all things.

I realized now how strange the journey had become. I had set out seeking an answer. I had imagined I would discover some final form of "I," some definite shape that would declare,

This is me. But the further I traveled, the more I lost, until what remained was not a thing at all, but an awareness of being itself—without attributes, without definition, without ownership.

It was as though I had mistaken my reflection for my self all these years. The face in the mirror ages. The voice changes. The titles shift. The roles come and go. But behind the mirror, beyond the face, the silent observer has watched each change without changing. Even as the body stumbled through time, the witness remained untouched by the currents that carried the flesh toward its eventual rest.

In that moment, I understood why ancient mystics spoke in riddles and paradoxes. How can one describe what has no form? How can one define that which lies before definition itself? To name it would be to limit it. To grasp it would be to lose it.

The silent witness is like the sky that holds both storm and sunshine without belonging to either. It is like the endless space that allows stars to shine, but claims no light as its own. It is the deep sea beneath waves, unmoved by the winds above. It is the ancient mountain that watches empires rise and fall, remaining unmoved while time crumbles stone and flesh alike.

And yet, even this awareness seemed but a threshold. I felt its vastness, but sensed another mystery hiding behind its veil—something deeper still, something that even the witness itself might bow before. The search was not yet complete. The deepest chamber of the self still remained unopened. The question had grown so refined now that words could scarcely contain it.

Who am I, if even the witness is not the final

self?

I sat long into the silent hours, not moving, not speaking. The wind outside whispered as though trying to answer, but its language was older than words. The moon’s pale eye watched from afar, as though it too sought the answer to its own reflection upon the dark sea.

I closed my eyes, breathing slowly, not seeking, not resisting. The journey was preparing to cross into the nameless. I was standing at the
of that which cannot be spoken.

Chapter 7: The Return of the Formless

It is said that rivers, after surrendering themselves to the ocean, lose their name. The Ganges is no longer the Ganges, the Nile no longer the Nile; they are simply part of the immeasurable sea. And yet, when clouds rise from that same ocean, the river is reborn once more as rain, as dew, as snow upon distant mountains. So too was the journey of this vanishing “I.”

For a time beyond time, I had dissolved into that great sea where no name exists, where no witness remains. There was no observer, no observed. There was only being—vast, indivisible, unformed. But as the currents of existence shifted once more, a strange unfolding began. From the stillness, a movement. From the emptiness, a gentle return.

I did not return as I had departed. The "I" that had once clung to its name, its story, its fragile masks had vanished in the great silence. What now arose was not the old self reborn, but a reflection of that which has no center. Like the moon, I did not shine with my own light, but reflected the light of something greater, something without beginning or end.

The world, once a stage of restless striving, appeared now as a sacred dance, each form a fleeting wave upon the endless ocean. My body, which I had once mistaken as myself, I now saw as a passing instrument—temporary, delicate, yet no less divine for its impermanence. My breath, once the center of my fear and hope, was simply the rhythm of life borrowing space for a while. The thoughts that rose like sparks in my mind no longer claimed ownership; they were the playful weaving of existence itself.

I walked again among people, but saw their faces as mirrors of my own vanishing. Each person carried their own fragile shell of self, believing themselves separate, struggling to hold together the scattered fragments of identity. But behind every eye flickered the same silent witness, hidden beneath layers of forgetting. I saw children laugh, and behind their laughter was the innocence of the formless. I saw old men weep, and behind their sorrow was the same unspoken vastness. In every face, joy or pain, beauty or ruin, I glimpsed the quiet breath of that which contains all.

The great sages had often spoken of this with strange words—emptiness that is full, fullness that is empty, the formless that moves through form. Now, having crossed through the unseen door, their riddles no longer seemed distant or obscure. They were not puzzles to be solved,

but simple descriptions of a truth that can only be seen when the self has dissolved.

The world was unchanged, yet everything was different. A bird's song was no longer mere sound—it was the voice of the vast echoing through a tiny throat. The wind through the trees no longer whispered to my ears alone—it was speaking the unspoken language of being to itself. Even the smallest pebble beneath my feet carried within it the weight of the infinite, resting lightly upon the earth as though it too remembered its source.

In this state, words lost much of their power. Language belongs to the mind, but this seeing belonged to the silence behind the mind. Still, I spoke when needed, smiled when moved to, lived as life offered itself. Yet now I understood that there was no separation between the living and the lived. The dancer and the dance were one. The river and the sea had never been apart.

And so, the formless had returned—not as a prisoner of form, but as its silent master. The “I” walked again through the marketplace of the world, but carried no burden of self. Joy came like rain; sorrow came like wind; both were received without resistance. In the rising and falling of life’s waves, I saw only the endless play of that which never moves.

The journey had not ended, for existence itself is a journey without shore. But the seeker had vanished. The searcher had dissolved into the searched. What remained was neither man nor God, neither self nor nothingness, but that ancient, boundless presence which sings through all things.

The End